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U.S., CHINA AGREE ON LANDSAT GROUND STATION

NASA and the Chinese Academy of Sciences signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Beijing Jan. 24 covering China's participation in the experimental Landsat program. China will establish a ground station in the Beijing area to read out Earth resources data from Landsat D.

The ground station is to be purchased from U.S. industry under the Understanding on Cooperation in Space Technology of Jan. 31, 1979. The Landsat Memorandum of Understanding is the first formal agreement in the space area since the normalization of U.S.-China relations.

The signing came during a visit to China by a delegation headed by Dr. Frank Press, Presidential Science Advisor, which included NASA Administrator, Dr. Robert A. Frosch.

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The agreement was reached with the Chinese Academy of Sciences which will acquire and operate the new ground station near Beijing. The station will receive, process, archive and disseminate Landsat Earth resources data.

The agreement, which parallels those signed with a number of other foreign ground station operators, provides that the Chinese Academy of Sciences will make Landsat data it receives openly and uniformly available to others on a basis similar to the distribution policies followed by NASA and other U.S. agencies. The Academy will help share in the cost of operating the Landsat satellites by paying an annual access fee of \$200,000, beginning six months after the Beijing station begins receiving data.

Six Landsat ground stations already are in operation outside the U.S.: two in Canada and one each in Brazil, Italy, Sweden and Japan. New ground stations in Australia and India now are receiving test data and soon will be operational. Another station is under construction in Argentina, while a number of others are in the planning stages elsewhere.

U.S. ground stations for Landsat are located at Fairbanks, Alaska; Goldstone, Calif.; and at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md.

Landsat D is expected to be operational in 1982.
Landsat 3, launched in March 1978, still is operating.

Landsat data are being used by scientists and local officials in the U.S. and more than 100 foreign countries for a wide variety of applications ranging from crop inventories to flood assessment and mineral exploration. The Beijing ground station is expected to make significant contributions to Chinese modernization in such areas as agriculture, forestry and mining.

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